



Challenge, Learn, Achieve

Redwood Area Schools District 2897

***100 George Ramseth Drive
Redwood Falls, MN 56283
(507)-644-3531***

October 20, 2017

To whom it may concern:

We are writing this letter to voice our strong support for the continuation of E-Rate's Category 2 funding provided to public schools. While some may suggest this funding may be complex, antiquated, and incapable of achieving its promised goals, this has not been our experience. The economic support E-Rate has provided our district over the last few years has catalyzed significant changes to our technology infrastructure, changes that would be difficult to support and continue without the program's existence.

The digitization of our classrooms has made its supporting infrastructure vital to the educational success of our students. A decade ago, our district's technology consisted of about 95% desktop PCs with wired networking. Today, about 75% of the devices on our network are mobile and wireless, improving classroom flexibility and access to internet resources for teachers and students. Without the addition of enterprise wireless and growth to our wired network infrastructure, this paradigm shift would be impossible to support. In the last two years, E-Rate Category 2 funding has provided our district with new network switches and a brand new wireless network we use to operate our one-to-one Chromebook program. Supporting its operation will be vital to our future.

As our government advocates for technology growth in our K-12 school system, we hope the FCC continues its role in supporting this agenda. The 2014 Modernization Order was a great step in adjusting E-Rate funding and operations to the needs of the present. The evolution of E-Rate applications and the creation of the EPC made applying for these funds much more efficient. But the job is not complete; it is ongoing. Over time, our present network will struggle to support the demands of the future. When that future arrives, the support of the FCC will mean the difference between budgeting in the tens of thousands of dollars or budgeting in the hundreds of thousands. The former is achievable, the latter very challenging. We are very thankful for the economic support this program has provided in supporting our educational mission thus far. It is our hope that its continuation will not be anything to question.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lien

Technology Director

Redwood Area Schools, Redwood Falls, MN